

## not to be missed this month

February is  
Black History Month

### FEBRUARY 5

Brush Collection Northeast

### FEBRUARY 6

Town Council Work Session  
11:00 am

Planning Commission meeting  
7:30 pm

### FEBRUARY 12

Brush Collection Northwest

### FEBRUARY 13

Town Council Meeting  
7:30 pm

### FEBRUARY 14

Valentine's Day

### FEBRUARY 19

Presidents Day, Town Offices Closed  
Trash Collection on Schedule

### FEBRUARY 20

Town Council Work Session  
11:00 am  
Brush Collection Southwest

### FEBRUARY 22

Blacksburg Museum and  
Smithfield Plantation Lecture  
Series — St. Paul A.M.E. Church  
Location TBD

### FEBRUARY 23

Citizens Academy Registration  
Opens

### FEBRUARY 24

Blacksburg Home Expo, Kipps  
Elementary School Gym

### FEBRUARY 26

Brush Collection Southeast

### FEBRUARY 27

Town Council Meeting —  
7:30 pm

## not to be missed



## in this issue

Cooking up Culinary History .....	2
Juried Art Exhibition.....	2
Town Completes National Citizens Survey .....	3
New <a href="http://www.blacksburg.gov">www.blacksburg.gov</a> in the Works .....	3
Planting Trees for the Future.....	4
Blacksburg considers towing ordinance changes .....	4
From the Manager.....	5
Changes for the Blacksburg PD.....	5
Parks & Recreation Comes to You...6	

# about town

newsletter of the town of blacksburg [www.blacksburg.gov](http://www.blacksburg.gov) • february 2007

## Employee Focus: “Chico, the Bike Man”

**David** “Chico” Cole is a familiar face to many who visit downtown Blacksburg on weekdays. For almost ten years, Chico has been seen riding his bike, patrolling the streets of Blacksburg as one of the police department’s bike patrol officers. Recently the Community Relations Office sat down with Chico to find out more about him.

### Quick Facts:

**NAME:** David “Chico” Cole

**HOMETOWN:** Radford, VA

**BIRTHDAY:** May 8, 1968

**MARTIAL STATUS:** Married to Lisa, one daughter  
Haley (9)

**PETS:** Miniature Dachshund - Reese, American  
Eskimo - Nicci, Cat - Kelsi

**FAVORITE MOVIE:** *Sling Blade*

### Where did you get the nickname Chico?

I actually got it in the 8th grade from a guy I went to high school with. We were both on the baseball team. He saddled me with it and it stuck ever since.

### How old were you when you thought, “Hey, I would like to be a police officer?”

I actually have a newspaper article that the *News Journal* did on my dad because he was a police officer in Radford. I was 15 at the time and thinking that’s what I wanted to do. I knew that was the direction I wanted to go in life.

### How long have you been a police officer?

Almost 18 years. I was a Deputy Sheriff with the City of Radford for about 9 months. I didn’t like working inside so I went to work with the Town of Pulaski and worked there

as a road officer for almost 4 years. Then I came to Blacksburg.

### How long have you been an officer with the Town of Blacksburg?

A little over 13 years.

### How long have you been a bike officer?

In April it will be 10 years.

### Do you like being a bike officer or is it just part of the job?

I love it. It’s being out. It’s being in the open — not being confined to a space like the inside of a car. I’m a people person so it allows me to be able to get out and chat with people and still do the law enforcement function. This type of position suits me and fits me like a hand in a glove. It’s perfect.

### How many miles a day do you ride?

Normally I would say anywhere between 10 and 20 miles a day.

### What are some of the challenges you face in your job?

I think one of the major challenges you face is dealing with people who have mental health crisis’. You have to use all of your experience a lot of times to try to help that person and to find something that will meet the needs they have.

### What have been some of the most unusual/unforgettable things that have happened on your shift?

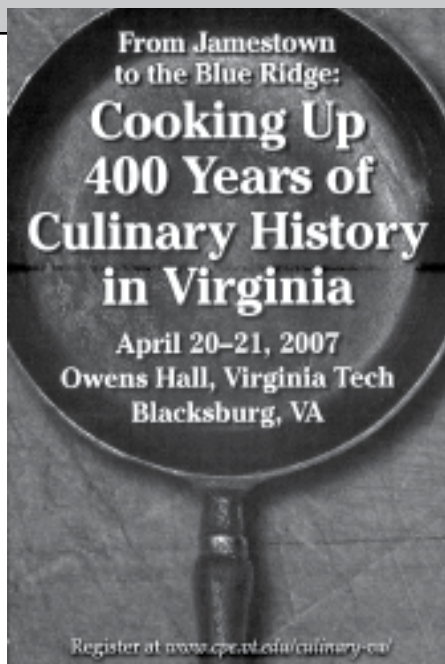
As a road officer you don’t get many opportunities to investigate crimes. About 5 years ago a guy called the police department because he had information that he thought would prove his roommate had killed his dog. I listened to what he told me and the more he talked, the more I thought it was worth looking into. And just through the course of that investigation the guy was convicted. It was very gratifying because I have been a pet owner my entire life, but also because it was such a challenge to put the pieces of that puzzle together to get a charge and conviction.

Also several years ago it was during Thanksgiving Break and businesses had just put Christmas Trees on sale. I was working the evening shift and I’m going down North on Main Street. Just past Bogen’s, a car comes off of Giles Road and I see what I thought was a Christmas Tree on top of a car. I thought, “It’s 11:30 pm, they’ve stolen a tree.” When I got behind the car at Turner Street, I turned the lights on and realized it wasn’t a Christmas

— see *Chico*, continued on page 4

**Officer Cole patrols the downtown  
on a cold winter day**





## COMMUNITY PROGRAM COOKS UP 400 YEARS OF CULINARY HISTORY

As an official participant in the Virginia 2007 Community Program, the Town of Blacksburg is collaborating with several local organizations to plan and promote events celebrating our community's unique history. Among the many exciting programs planned for the year is *From*

*Jamestown to the Blue Ridge: Cooking Up 400 Years of Culinary History in Virginia*, a symposium sponsored by the Peacock-Harper Culinary History Committee at Owens Hall on the Virginia Tech campus, April 20-21, 2007.

The Peacock-Harper Culinary History Committee governs and guides the Peacock-Harper Culinary Collection at Virginia Tech's Special Collections Library. A generous donation from Dora Greenlaw Peacock and Laura Jane Harper started the collection which has grown to include over three centuries of historical information including cookbooks, recipes, photographs, and other pieces of culinary history. In addition to promoting and guiding the collection, the committee sponsors several educational programs each year.

*From Jamestown to the Blue Ridge: Cooking Up 400 Years of Culinary History in Virginia* is the only culinary event in Virginia celebrating the founding of Jamestown. It will include talks by a wide range of culinary experts, historians, and cookbook authors including Barbara Haber, former curator of books at the Radcliffe Institute's Schlesinger Library at Harvard University, and author of several books and articles on culinary history. Virginia Tech's Alumni Distinguished Professor of

History, Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr., will deliver a talk on Civil War rations. Other lecture topics include cooks and foodways at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello and starvation and nutrition at Jamestown.

The symposium will conclude with a grand finale banquet incorporating foods available during colonial times and adapted to reflect the tastes of modern diners. John Egerton, editor, author, and a founding of Southern Foods Alliance will deliver the evening's keynote address, and Virginia Tech's Nikki Giovanni, poet and Caldecott Medal winner, will introduce Mr. Egerton.

For more information or to register, please visit [www.cpe.vt.edu/culinary-va/](http://www.cpe.vt.edu/culinary-va/) or contact Cynthia Bertelsen at [cbertal@usit.net](mailto:cbertal@usit.net). Additional information about the Peacock-Harper Culinary History Collection is available at [www.culinarycollection.org](http://www.culinarycollection.org).

The Virginia 2007 Community Program, administered by the Jamestown 2007 Committee, encourages communities throughout Virginia to celebrate their unique cultural heritage in 2007 with special events and programs. A complete list of special events, exhibits, lectures, and other Blacksburg projects is available at [www.blacksburg.gov/museum/community](http://www.blacksburg.gov/museum/community).

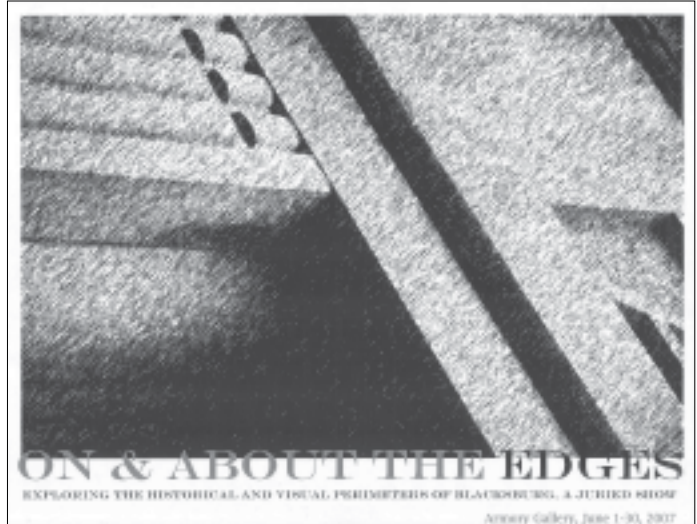
## Juried Art Exhibition Explores Town Historic Buildings

As part of Blacksburg's yearlong celebration of local history in association with the Virginia 2007 Community Program, the Blacksburg Museum is collaborating with Virginia Tech's Armory Gallery to present *On & About the Edges* in June 2007, an exhibit focusing on the eight historic buildings currently owned by the Town of Blacksburg. They include:

The Price House, 1840s-1853	(107 Wharton Street)
The Five Chimneys House, 1852	(203 Washington Street)
The Thomas-Conner House, 1878	(104 Draper Road)
The Alexander Black House, ca. 1897	(204 Draper Road)
The Odd Fellows Hall, 1905	(203 Gilbert Street)
The Bennett House, ca. 1912	(303 Wilson Avenue)
Old Town Hall, ca. 1920	(141 Jackson Street)
The Armory, 1936	(201 Draper Road)

Local and regional artists are invited to produce works, in any medium, based on the exteriors of these structures to draw attention to the Town's historic preservation efforts while highlighting the New River Valley's gifted art community. Artists are encouraged to approach these buildings from a variety of viewpoints, exploring their distinct architectural styles, surrounding landscapes, and historic character. The exhibit will be on display at the Armory Gallery June 1-30, 2007 accompanied by educational programs and events.

A call to artists is currently available at the Blacksburg Municipal Building, the Armory Gallery, and online at [www.blacksburg.gov/museum/community](http://www.blacksburg.gov/museum/community). Artists may submit up to three (3) 35mm slides or digital images on CD in jpeg format for consideration. Submissions will be accepted until April 15, and selected artists will be notified by April 25. Additional details are listed in the call to artists.



The Armory, built in 1936 and owned by the Town, is a fitting venue for this exhibit standing near the intersection of the town and university communities. It was originally built on the former Blacksburg High School campus and used as both an armory and an auditorium. Today, it is home to the main offices of Virginia Tech's Art and Art History Department, a gallery, and studios for several art classes.

The exhibit is one of many events planned as part of the Virginia 2007 Community Program. Administered by the Jamestown 2007 Committee, the program encourages communities throughout Virginia to celebrate their unique cultural heritage in 2007 with special events and programs. A complete list of special events, exhibits, lectures, and other Blacksburg projects is available at [www.blacksburg.gov/museum/community](http://www.blacksburg.gov/museum/community).

For further information contact Jessica Wirgau, Museum Coordinator, at [museum@blacksburg.gov](mailto:museum@blacksburg.gov) or at (540) 558-0730.

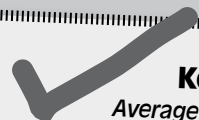


## Town Completes The National Citizen Survey™

How do you rate Blacksburg as a place to live? What about the recreational opportunities, trash service, ease of travel, shopping opportunities, and safety of your neighborhood? These were just a few of the questions recently asked in the Town's Citizen Survey.

The survey, developed by the Town of Blacksburg through a partnership with the International City Manager's Association and the National Research Center, Inc., was distributed to a random sampling of 3,000 households. The results allow the Town to obtain valuable feedback from its citizens and to ultimately use the data to measure service performance, assess community needs, and make long-range, short term or strategic plans.

The survey is part of a regular cycle to gather citizen perceptions of a wide range of community and government topics. In 2003 the Town conducted its first survey through ICMA and NRC, which consisted primarily of the same set of questions. This survey tool will be used every two years to allow the Town to track a valuable set of data and identify trends over time. By participating in a survey that is conducted throughout the United States, the Town is also able to compare itself to similar communities and identify top performing services and areas that need attention.



### Key Survey Results

Average rating based on a 100-point scale:  
(100 = excellent 0=poor)

Overall Quality of Life in Blacksburg	71
Blacksburg as a place to raise children	70
Blacksburg as a place to retire	62
Overall image/reputation	70
Recreational Opportunities	57
Shopping Opportunities	30
Job Opportunities	36

### Averaging Rating on a 100-point scale (100=strongly agree, 0=strongly disagree)

Blacksburg welcomes citizen involvement	68
Town government listens to citizens	60

To view the complete survey report visit us on the web at <http://www.blacksburg.gov/>.

## DESIGN UNDERWAY FOR NEW BLACKSBURG.GOV

In the year 2000 the Town of Blacksburg launched its current website *blacksburg.gov*. Since this time rapid growth in web development and technologies has changed the way we as local governments do business. Online information has become highly interlinked and available in multimedia formats. Content management systems which allow individual users to judiciously update their own content rather than a web development team have become standard for many large organizations.

To better serve the citizens of Blacksburg, the Town is taking steps to implement the new technology of content management to enhance communication with the public and provide information that is reliable, easy to find, and always up to date. So, what does that mean? We're designing a new website and you're going to love it.

The Town is working with award winning local government design

consultants, Vision Internet. Vision has developed new sites for such communities as Charlottesville, Virginia; Lynchburg, Virginia; Longview, Washington; Bellflower, California; and Englewood, Colorado to name a few. This means the new Blacksburg.gov site will be built to address the needs of our citizens, visitors, and multitudes of others seeking information about the Town of Blacksburg.

The new site will offer a streamlined approach to finding information; vibrant colors and a look and feel that truly reflects all that Blacksburg has to offer. Services that you may be accustomed to will still be available, only better. Blacksburg Alert; Online Billing; Project Information; a Calendar of Meetings and Events; Streaming Video; Council and Planning Commission actions and more.

In October, the Town's website steering committee and Vision Internet held a number of community stakeholder meetings to determine the wants and needs of the community when it relates to their government website. Phase one of the project included input and discussion among Town staff and department heads, technology consultants and partners;

citizens, elected officials, and economic development representatives. With the information gathered from these meetings Vision is currently working on the design of the new site.

"The new site may take users some time to become familiar with the improved features and layout, but they should find many substantial improvements," said Heather Browning, Community Relations Manager. For example, the home page will consist of dynamic content to include current news and Town happenings. The main navigation will be organized in a user friendly drop down style list of links placing information one click away from the home page. Dynamic content, easy to use navigation and a new aesthetically appealing design will offer vast improvements to a site that has served the Town well for a number of years, but has simply outgrown technologies of its day.

The new site is expected to go live by late summer 2007. For more information contact the Community Relations Office at 540-961-1199 or email [hbrowning@blacksburg.gov](mailto:hbrowning@blacksburg.gov).

**About Town** is a publication of the Town of Blacksburg Community Relations Office.

**mission of the town of blacksburg**  
To support a dynamic community by providing effective municipal services and enhancing Blacksburg's quality of life.

printed on recycled paper About Town can be recycled in the White Paper category

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Tom Sherman

Your key to local government  
news and information





— Chico, continued from page 1

Tree on top of the car, it was a person. There's this guy laying on top of the car with a Lay's potato chip bag stuck over his head. The driver and the guy on top were drunk. The guy had jumped on top and they'd shut the car doors on his hands so he wouldn't fall off. After I pull them over, he gets off the top of the car and starts eating the potato chips out of the bag that had been on his head. I said to the driver, "Why did you put him on top?" and they said, "Well we didn't have anywhere inside for him to ride." The driver got a DUI, but I didn't have the heart to arrest the guy on top.

**What do you like best about your job?**

As far as riding the bike, it's the freedom, the not being confined to a space. And it's being able to be out and talk to people and get to know people on a first name basis.

**What do you like least about your job?**

I wish I never had to arrest anyone. I wish that people behaved enough to where you didn't have to arrest them. While it's gratifying to catch someone doing something wrong, you still wish deep down that everyone behaved in such a way that you didn't have to do that.

**If you were not a police officer, what would you want to be?**

A school teacher, coach, or physical education teacher. Something along those lines.

**What do you love most about Blacksburg?**

I think it's the wide variety of people that are here. If you talk to them and listen to what they have to say you can learn a lot about people.

**What do you like to do in your spare time?**

My hobby is weight lifting.

**Where would people most likely see you?**

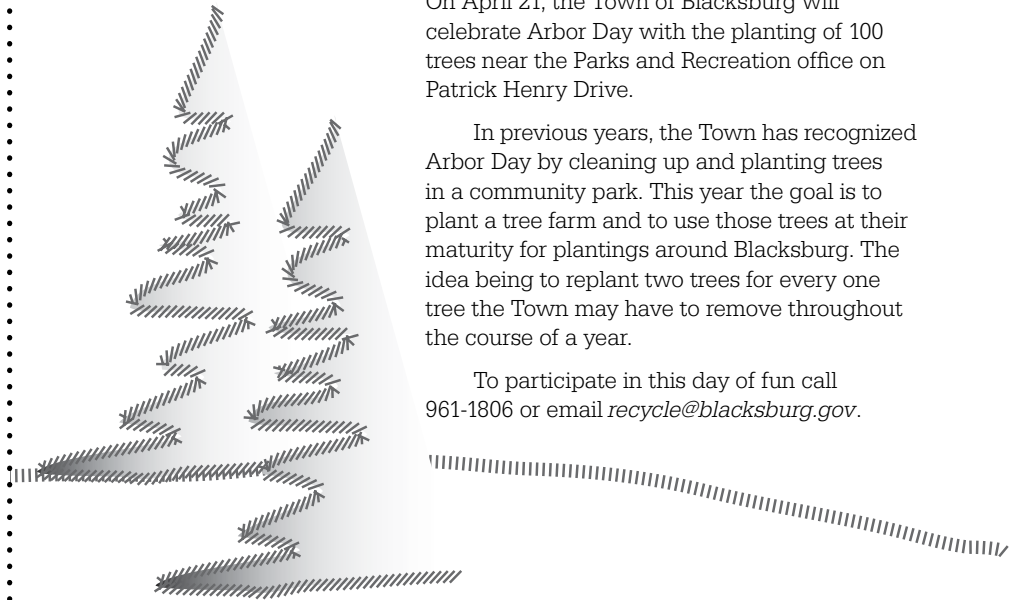
The most frequent places are College Avenue, Draper Road, and Main Street.

## Planting Trees for the Future

On April 21, the Town of Blacksburg will celebrate Arbor Day with the planting of 100 trees near the Parks and Recreation office on Patrick Henry Drive.

In previous years, the Town has recognized Arbor Day by cleaning up and planting trees in a community park. This year the goal is to plant a tree farm and to use those trees at their maturity for plantings around Blacksburg. The idea being to replant two trees for every one tree the Town may have to remove throughout the course of a year.

To participate in this day of fun call 961-1806 or email [recycle@blacksburg.gov](mailto:recycle@blacksburg.gov).



## Blacksburg Considers Towing Ordinance Changes

Tows from private parking lots frequently result in citizen complaints about the amount of the tow or the reason for the tow. In response to these concerns, the Town of Blacksburg is working to update its existing towing ordinance and incorporate recent changes by the General Assembly that permit more local control over towing companies.

State law amendments that took effect on July 1, 2006 permit local governments to adopt ordinances that require tow companies to take photographs documenting the basis for towing a vehicle. Tow companies can also be required to post signs stating maximum towing fees and providing contact information. The amount of towing fees can also be regulated. Virginia law limits towing fees to \$125, with an additional \$25 fee for tows made at night or on weekends. However, cities, counties and towns can establish, by ordinance, lower maximum towing fees. The state law amendments also permit local governments to require safe, well-lit storage facilities for vehicles that are towed.

The Town Attorney has prepared an ordinance that would incorporate a



number of these changes into Blacksburg's existing towing ordinance. For example, the draft ordinance would require towing companies to take digital photographs documenting the basis for the tow. It also proposes lower maximum towing fees, improved sign requirements, and additional requirements for storage yards. The draft ordinance also attempts to improve the existing definition of "partial tows," which refers to situations where the vehicle owner returns before the vehicle has been towed.

Before changes to the Town's ordinance can be adopted, the Town needed to establish a Towing Advisory Board to review and comment on the proposed amendments. Town Council established Blacksburg's Towing Advisory Board last fall, and the Board had its first meeting on November 30, 2006. The Towing Advisory Board will meet again in January to continue its review of the proposed ordinance. After this review, the Board's comments will be submitted to the Town Council, and a public hearing and vote will be scheduled. For more information, contact Town Attorney Larry Spencer at 961-1146.



## FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

Dear Blacksburg Citizens:

As you know, the Town of Blacksburg recently conducted a survey to receive your feedback on a variety of factors ranging from quality of life indicators to quality of Town services. Overall, the results were very positive.

It is a team effort to maintain and improve Blacksburg's quality of life and the quality services that we all enjoy. We are fortunate to have citizens that care about their community and participate

in local government. Equally important are the Town employees that are dedicated to providing efficient, high quality public services and elected officials who are committed to developing policies to ensure a positive future.

The results of our citizen survey reflect this commitment to our community and highlight the reasons we all choose Blacksburg as our home. I encourage you to get out in your community and enjoy all that we have to offer. Thank you for participating in this survey and helping make Blacksburg *A Special Place*.

Sincerely,

Marc A. Verniel



Front Left to Right:  
Lieutenant C.D. Cummings and  
Captain D.K. Goodman

Back Left to Right:  
Lieutenant J.A. Glass,  
Sergeant S.M. Taylor, and  
Sergeant A.S. Wilson

At an earlier ceremony, Kim Crannis is pinned Chief of Police by her mother. Standing in support is retired Chief Bill Brown.

## POSITIVE CHANGE FOR BLACKSBURG PD

In early October, Blacksburg welcomed Kim Crannis as its new Chief of Police. Since this time, Chief Crannis has been busy making some positive changes in the department. "As an agency, we had become somewhat reactive as opposed to proactive," said Crannis. "Our new personnel assignments along with two new units (Traffic Unit and Street Crimes Unit) will put us back into the proactive mode."

Once formed, the traffic unit will be tasked with traffic enforcement, traffic crash investigations, conducting traffic studies, utilizing the mobile speed display units and other related assignments. Tentatively, the street crimes unit will be tasked with addressing crimes in and around the downtown and surrounding area as well as drug related crimes. This unit will be a joint team comprised of both Town and Virginia Tech police personnel.

Congratulations to the following members of the Blacksburg Police Department for their dedication to the safety and welfare of our community. On January 9, the Town Council held a special pinning ceremony to recognize several promotions within the department.

- Sergeant J. A. Glass promoted to Lieutenant  
– Criminal Investigations Unit
- Sergeant C. D. Cummings promoted to Lieutenant  
– Relief Lieutenant
- Detective S. M. Taylor promoted to Sergeant  
– Services Division, Crime Prevention
- Detective A. S. Wilson promoted to Sergeant  
– Criminal Investigations Unit
- Lieutenant D.K. Goodman promoted to Captain  
– Police Operations Division Commander



**Community Relations**

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## Blacksburg Parks And Recreation Comes To You

Registering for activities with the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation department is now just a point and click away. Beginning in January Blacksburg began offering registration for its winter activities online at <http://www.blacksburg.gov/recreation/>.

While there you can browse the entire catalog of activities offered, view class and trip availability, and even access old receipts to track previous registrations. "We've tried to make it more convenient for the customer to sign up for the programs they want without ever having to leave the comfort of their home" said Dean Crane, Director of Parks and Recreation.

Registering is easy! If you've signed up for programs in the past, the system already has the information it needs, your house number. The number is also located on any previous registration receipts you may have. Enter that number into the user name box, and the system will prompt you for the rest.

Individuals who have never registered for activities with Blacksburg Parks and Recreation should call 540-961-1149 or email [recreation@blacksburg.gov](mailto:recreation@blacksburg.gov) to receive instructions.

Registration is still available in person at the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department located at 615 Patrick Henry Drive.



Whether its dance lessons, youth basketball, kayaking, or rock climbing, Blacksburg Parks and Recreation offers something for everyone.



### next month

#### MARCH 1

Elderly Tax Relief Renewals Due  
Business License Renewal Due

#### MARCH 5

Brush Collection Northeast

#### MARCH 6

Town Council Work Session  
11:00 am  
Planning Commission Meeting  
7:30 pm

#### MARCH 11

Daylight Savings Time Begins

#### MARCH 12

Brush Collection Northwest

#### MARCH 13

Town Council Meeting  
7:30 pm

#### MARCH 16

Citizen's Academy Registration  
Closes

#### MARCH 17

St. Patrick's Day

#### MARCH 19

Spring Cleanup Southeast

#### MARCH 20

Town Council Work Session  
11:00 am

#### MARCH 21

First Day of Spring

#### MARCH 22

Blacksburg Museum and  
Smithfield Plantation Lecture  
Series — Women's History  
Month Lecture  
Location TBD

#### MARCH 26

Spring Cleanup Northeast

#### MARCH 27

Town Council Meeting  
7:30 pm